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CHINA: NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR ISSUE

China shares our goal of a nuclear-free Korea achieved through diplomacy and dialogue. Like us, it sees North Korea's compliance with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and membership in the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) as essential. It has also expressed support for the South-North Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

China's role in the UN and at IAEA Board of Governors meetings has proven equally quiet but crucially important. In every critical vote, China has either abstained or voted to support the IAEA. Last May its abstention in the Security Council allowed passage of a resolution supportive of the IAEA while calling on North Korea to comply with its safeguards commitments. At the most recent IAEA Board meeting last December, China voted in favor of a similar resolution.

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Our efforts thus far have achieved some progress. North Korea has suspended its withdrawal from the NPT. It has promised to resume serious dialogue with South Korea on the nuclear issue. Most recently, it agreed to and has begun consultations with the IAEA on inspections necessary to maintain the continuity of safeguards.

The stage appears set for a third round of formal talks with North Korea. China obviously is comfortable with our approach so far. So, too, are the Republic of Korea and Japan, not to mention other key allies.

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